



ANSFORD ACADEMY

LEARNING TOGETHER TO LEAD OUR LIVES

Contingency Plan

Status:	Required
Adopted:	January 2025
Renewal period:	Annually (to ensure compliance with current regulations)
Review Date:	January 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equalities Policy (Exams) (previously called Disability Policy)
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Exams Archiving Policy
- Exams Policy
- Internal Appeals Policy
- Non-Examination Assessment Policy
- Equality Act 2010 – Ansford Statement

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Karl Musson
Exams officer line manager	Karl Musson
Exams officer	Jo Dyal
SENCo	Rebecca Wood
SLT member(s)	*Karl Musson*, Duncan Powell, Rebecca Comyns, Rob Mitchell, Frances Hirst, Thomas Cue, Rebecca Wood

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process at Ansford Academy Trust. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms Ansford Academy Trust's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually:

- a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Ansford Academy **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.

Ansford Academy **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Ansford Academy **must** ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Ansford Academy responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre may absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated to Rob Mitchell, Deputy Headteacher.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- ▶ *annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered*
- ▶ *annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines*
- ▶ *sufficient invigilators not recruited*

Entries

- ▶ *awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff*
- ▶ *candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment*
- ▶ *awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred*

Pre-exams

- ▶ *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- ▶ *exam timetabling, rooming allocation,; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- ▶ *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- ▶ *confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*
- ▶ *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

Exam time

- ▶ *exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies*
- ▶ *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- ▶ *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies*

Results and post-results

- ▶ *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*

- ▶ *the facilitation of the post-results services*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre has more than one member of staff trained (Examinations Officer and Examinations Assistant) in all aspects of exam administration enabling the Examinations Assistant to cover the administrative role of the exams officer should there be a period of extended absence.
- ▶ The SLT examinations Line Manager is Karl Musson, Head of School and person nominated in escalation process is Deputy Headteacher, Rob Mitchell
- ▶ If there is significant impact to the role advice will be sought from the appropriate awarding bodies and Exams Officer Network.
- ▶ Reference can be made to the Exams Policy where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and can be covered by another person
- ▶ The Examinations Office maintains an 'Exams Manual' and 'Exams Procedures Document' to assist the administration of the exams process, containing an exams calendar and checklists
- ▶ Exams Officer maintains a network with staff from local centres sharing expertise.

2. SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- ▶ *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
- ▶ *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- ▶ *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated*

Pre-exams

- ▶ *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body*
- ▶ *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- ▶ *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- ▶ *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- ▶ *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre line manager for SEND, Duncan Powell, is able to cover the role of the SENCO in the event of extended absence.
- ▶ The Leadership Team will take responsibility for ensuring all aspects of exam administration are completed.
- ▶ The Exam Office, Head of Year 10 and 11, and LT to assist the SENCO line manager to ensure access arrangements deadlines are met.
- ▶ Learning Support Assistants to be used where necessary.
- ▶ Assistance to be requested from awarding bodies and SENCO Network group as required.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- ▶ *Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*
- ▶ *Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/very late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies*
- ▶ *Non-examination assessment (including controlled assessments and coursework) tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*
- ▶ *Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking*
- ▶ *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ All teaching staff are part of larger teams who will be aware of exam procedures and in the extended absence of a member of that team, another member of the team will be delegated to take responsibility for ensuring all aspects of exam administration continue. If this is not possible the member of the Leadership Team responsible for that team will be delegated the responsibility
- ▶ The Exams Office will liaise with the Head of Departments, teaching staff and LT to ensure all necessary deadlines are met
- ▶ If appropriate advice will be sought from the exam boards and special consideration will be considered.

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams*
- ▶ *Invigilator shortage on peak exam days*
- ▶ *Invigilator absence on the day of an exam*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The Exams Office to review invigilator staffing each academic year to ensure sufficient invigilators are recruited and fully trained in plenty of time for the examination season.
- ▶ The exams office regularly advertises to secure a large team of invigilators.
- ▶ The exams office employ additional invigilators to try to ensure each exam is secure
- ▶ In the event of invigilator shortage or absence at short notice the exams office have trained most admin and support staff members in invigilation and these will be directed to invigilate if required.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning*

- ▶ *Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*
- ▶ *Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre has multi rooms to use for examinations however if all of these become unavailable the centre will seek advice from the exam boards and may look to use an alternative site or centre
- ▶ The security of the exam will be maintained at all times, candidates will be supervised until alternative arrangements can be made
- ▶ If able classrooms will be closed and used as designated exam rooms
- ▶ If appropriate the exam could be sat in ‘sittings’
- ▶ If small rooms become unavailable due to an incident the Exams Office will liaise with the Cover Manager to re-room lessons if it can to make available further spaces to allow examinations to continue.
- ▶ The centre would communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to exam rooms, and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption via email (SchoolComms) or telephone if more urgent.

Alternative site details: St Dunstan’s School, Glastonbury

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ (This will include the required arrangements for cyber security)
(GR 3.21) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:
 - a) providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
 - b) providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
 - c) enabling additional security settings wherever possible
 - d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
 - e) setting up secure account recovery options
 - f) reviewing and managing connected applications
 - g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
 - h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies’ online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*
Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies’ multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.

reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body’s online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

- ▶ Promptly report any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- ▶ Where candidates produce work electronically;
 - ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre’s IT system
 - ensuring protection of the candidates’ work from corruption

- considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack
- ▶ Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work
- ▶ Using the NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services to help protect from cyber-attacks.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *IT system corruption affecting candidates' work*
- ▶ *MIS system failure at final entry deadline*
- ▶ *MIS system failure during exams preparation*
- ▶ *MIS system failure at results release time*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ (This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work) (GR 3.19) Ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks
- ▶ The Exams Office will have access to the off-site server back up
- ▶ The Exams Office will have access to a separate internet line in the event of internet failure
- ▶ The Exams Office and IT staff have remote access to systems via VPN
- ▶ The Exams Office try to ensure all exam entries are made at the start of February to allow for IT failures in the process. If however this were to happen advice would be sought from the exam boards
- ▶ If IT fails during exam preparation, advice would be sought from the exam boards however much is now available on line and as such the exams office would consider relocating to an alternative site to enable exam preparation to continue
- ▶ If IT fails during results release time, advice would be sought from the local IT help and LA IT help desk however if all else fails, the Exams Office would look to relocate to an alternative site to enable a smooth results release as much of the information is online if all of the first three options failed.

8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre have created a secure site and complies with all health and safety regulations
- ▶ The centre carries out practice critical incidents to ensure it is able to respond appropriately should this situation arise
- ▶ The centre has an emergency evacuation policy and a lock down policy in place as part of the exam suite of policies
- ▶ The centre would collate and complete an appropriate report and return it to the exam board without delay

- ▶ The centre would make a special consideration application if appropriate.

9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre would communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans, and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption via email (SchoolComms) or telephone if more urgent
- ▶ The centre would aim to prepare students, as usual for examinations
- ▶ The centre has a learning platform, along with online teaching programmes for many subjects so initially would be able to set work to enable students to learn
- ▶ If the centre was to close for a significant period of time the Leadership Team would look to alternative venues to enable teaching to continue
- ▶ The centre would take advice from local and national agencies and the exam boards
- ▶ The centre would act upon all advice given and keep candidates informed.

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations:
Consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates (see section 6.2 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations)
Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations)
Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process)
The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- ▶ The centre would seek advice/instructions from relevant local or national agencies
- ▶ The centre would seek and follow advice from exam boards immediately
- ▶ The centre would Invoke actions as detailed in statutory guidance
- ▶ The centre would consider if the timing of the exam could be delayed
- ▶ The centre would consider if the candidates could be transferred to an alternative centre in agreement with the awarding bodies. In such cases, the centre would apply for transferred candidate arrangements
- ▶ Candidates would be advised of the regulations regarding non attendance
- ▶ Candidates advised to sit the examination in the next available series (where available)

- ▶ Special consideration applications would be applied for if appropriate. Students need to have met the minimum requirement to be eligible for special consideration.
- ▶ The centre would communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to taking exams, and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption via email (SchoolComms) or telephone if more urgent
- ▶ The centre will prioritise students whose progression into further education will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examinations period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of not being able to open as normal:
(This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).)
The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies
Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria
The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required

Alternative site(s) details: St Dunstan's School, Glastonbury

- ▶ The centre would seek advice/instructions from relevant local or national agencies
- ▶ The centre would seek and follow advice from exam boards immediately
- ▶ The centre would Invoke actions as detailed in statutory guidance
- ▶ The centre would look to find an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding bodies; options include Caryford Hall in close vicinity, Sports Hall is a separate building to the Academy. In such cases, the centre would apply for alternative site arrangements
- ▶ The centre would consider if the candidates could be transferred to an alternative centre in agreement with the awarding bodies. In such cases, the centre would apply for transferred candidate arrangements
- ▶ The candidates may be offered to sit examination at the next examination series (where available)
- ▶ Application to be made to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for students where the minimum requirements have been met. Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control
- ▶ The centre would communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to taking exams, and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption via email (SchoolComms) or telephone if more urgent
- ▶ The centre will prioritise students whose progression into further education will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action.
Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- ▶ The centre knows when exam papers are being delivered and if not delivered accordingly will discuss with the exam boards
- ▶ The centre has a system in place to know which papers it has received or not and will follow up if there is any non-deliverance with the appropriate exam board prior to the exam date. If appropriate the exam board will release an online version of the exam for centre printing
- ▶ Awarding bodies to source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies
- ▶ Should an exam board be required to provide the centres with electronic access to examination papers, these would be received, made and stored under secure conditions
- ▶ Should an exam board consider scheduling of an examination on an alternative date (Contingency Day), the centre will follow guidance from the exam board and re-schedule as appropriate.

13. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The centre and examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service, the centre would contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and would not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- ▶ For any examinations not covered in the national 'yellow label' service, the centre would investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*.
- ▶ The centre ensures all exam scripts not collected are stored in secure storage until such time as collection is made
- ▶ The centre keeps a record of all despatches as do most exam boards
- ▶ The centre will let an exam board know immediately it is known there is a problem with despatch.

14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked. Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- ▶ Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series
- ▶ The centre will take advice from the exam board
- ▶ Candidates' marks for affected assessments may be given based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding bodies
- ▶ Candidates to re-take affected assessment at subsequent assessment window
- ▶ Application to be made to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for students where the minimum requirements have been met. Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The Exams Office works to the IT Department in preparation to ensure all programmes are working prior to results day
- ▶ The centre works with exam boards who check systems are all working for results day
- ▶ The centre will make arrangements to access and distribute results at an alternative location
- ▶ The centre will liaise with the exam board if there is significant issues surrounding distribution of results
- ▶ The centre will take advice from local and national agencies and respond accordingly
- ▶ The centre will keep candidates informed
- ▶ The centre will make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- ▶ The centre will prioritise students whose progression into further education will be severely delayed if they do not receive their results when planned.

Alternative site details: St Dunstan's School, Glastonbury

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC),

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

You may also wish to see the [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review your contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure'.
6. Communicate with students, parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant awarding body for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students are able to complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students; for example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

If any students misses an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects, depending on their specific policies.

See also: [JCQ's guidance on special consideration](#)

Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA Regulation](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [DfE](#) in England, the [DfE](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption, and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service \(UCAS\)](#) and the [Central Applications Office \(CAO\)](#) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a

public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements](#). As in 2023, Ofqual has provided [guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published [guidance for contingency assessment arrangements](#) for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](#) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children’s social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

[Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the *[Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted](#)*, (last updated 7 May 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>]

JCQ

15. CONTINGENCY PLANNING

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre,

examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

15.7 In the event that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2025, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

15.8 Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

[JCQ guidance above taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2024-2025*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, **Contingency planning**]

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents>

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

General Regulations for *Approved Centres* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance notes on *Alternative Site* arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Guidance notes concerning *Transferred Candidate* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/>

Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024 www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption;

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>

Cyber security training for school staff <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>

Appendix 1

In September 2023, Ofqual released new guidance to schools on collecting student performance evidence. This is to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for GCSEs in the unlikely event that government determines that exams are not able to go ahead.

The guidance asks that schools and colleges make sure that students sit mock exams in exam conditions before their formal exams, and that their papers are kept as evidence. One set of mocks for this purpose should be enough alternative evidence of student performance to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), if needed.

Resilience arrangements confirmed:

- ▶ Student evidence from one set of mocks in exam conditions should be sufficient to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as teacher assessed grades (TAGs).
- ▶ Schools and colleges should plan assessment opportunities in line with their usual assessment approaches – where possible, these should be in the first half of the academic year.
- ▶ Students should be assessed under exam-like conditions and, wherever possible, at the same time or using different materials at different times.
- ▶ Assessment materials should be as useful as possible for students preparing to take summer exams – similar to full or parts of exam papers.
- ▶ Students should be assessed on a wide range of content.
- ▶ Total time spent assessing students should not normally exceed the total time students would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment.
- ▶ Students must be told before each assessment their performance would be used as part of evidence to determine a teacher assessed grade.
- ▶ Reasonable adjustments: the same adjustments made for disabled students taking exams in the summer should be applied, where possible, to assessments.
- ▶ Special consideration: if a student's performance was affected by an event such as illness or family bereavement, the teacher should mark the assessment as normal but record the issues so they can be taken into account later.
- ▶ Teachers should mark in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance but be aware that the grade boundaries from Autumn 2020, 2021 and Summer 2022 reflect the grading arrangements in place during the pandemic, which were more lenient.
- ▶ Students should not resit assessments for the purpose of evidence collection.
- ▶ Teachers may tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed.
- ▶ Student work must be retained by the centre – digitally or physically.
- ▶ Students may be given a copy or the original of their work.
- ▶ Students should be supported to complete their non-exam assessment (NEA) wherever possible.

Centre preparations should the nationwide contingency plan be invoked

- ▶ Ansford Academy have a plan assessment opportunities in line with usual assessment approaches
- ▶ Students will be assessed under exam-like conditions and, wherever possible, at the same time or using different materials at different times
- ▶ Assessment materials will be as useful as possible for students preparing to take summer exams – similar to full or parts of exam papers
- ▶ Students will be assessed on a wide range of content

- ▶ Total time spent assessing students will not normally exceed the total time students would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment
- ▶ Students will be told before each assessment their performance would be used as part of evidence to determine a teacher assessed grade
- ▶ Reasonable adjustments: the same adjustments made for disabled students taking exams in the summer will be applied, where possible, to assessments
- ▶ Special consideration: if a student's performance was affected by an event such as illness or family bereavement, the teacher will mark the assessment as normal but record the issues so they can be taken into account later
- ▶ Teachers will mark in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance but be aware that the grade boundaries from Autumn 2020, 2021 and Summer 2022 reflect the grading arrangements in place during the pandemic, which were more lenient
- ▶ Students will not resit assessments for the purpose of evidence collection; however, they may repeat assessments where they are not being used as evidence
- ▶ Teachers will tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed
- ▶ Student work will be securely retained by Faculty Heads, or in the Examinations Office where required (physical work), or securely stored digitally where appropriate
- ▶ Students may be given a copy of their work, but will not annotate on completed papers, where this is required, a different colour pen will be used
- ▶ Students will be supported to complete all non-exam assessment (NEA) wherever possible.